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The Location and Etymology of יְהוָה יִרְאֶה, Gn. 22¹⁴

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THE explanations that have been offered for this difficult term have been largely conjectural. It is generally recognized that the pointing must be the same in both occurrences of the expression (both in the same verse), and that יִרְאֶה should not be pointed as Qal the first time and as Niphal the second. So the Pesh., Old Latin, and Vulgate read Qal in both places; LXX and Luc. read as in our present Hebrew texts; the majority of modern scholars read Niphal in both places.

There is a difference of opinion as to the location of the sanctuary. The Samaritans placed the story of the interrupted sacrifice of Isaac at Mount Gerizim; the Jews, with equal tenacity, placed it at Mount Moriah, and the later editor of the chapter has rather clumsily trundled the Jewish tradition into the story.¹ Both these notions may be abandoned, and some other explanation sought.

By judicious omissions, substitutions, and changing of order, Gunkel² finds that the group of consonants יִרְאֶה occurs three times in this chapter. For this reason he proceeds to identify the spot which is called in our present text יְהוָה יִרְאֶה with the יִרְאֶה of 2 Ch. 20¹⁶, and locates it in the neighborhood of Tekoa. This at least has the merit of

¹ The reading הַמִּרְיָה is plainly not the original in Gn. 22². Pesh. reads הַמִּרְיָה. LXX τῆς νύμφης and Aq. καταφανή show that both these authorities read הַמִּרְיָה, which was probably the earliest reading. Aquila's translation evidently derives הַמִּרְיָה from the root "to be evident, prominent"; cf. Assyrian *amaru*, "to see."

² *Genesis*³, *in loco*.

ingenuity. Holzinger³ makes the significant note, "ohne Location, auf jeden heiligen Ort anwendbar," not attempting to identify it with any particular spot.

Gunkel is undoubtedly correct in his supposition that the original reading must have been אל instead of יהוה. Cheyne notices this,⁴ and suggests the identification of this spot with the אל רא of Gn. 16. Of this conclusion the present writer sees further indications.

The Hagar story of Gn. 16 is universally ascribed to J, with the exception of vv. 9-10, which are attributed to E. These two verses are each introduced by the stereotyped יהוה יאמר לה מלאך, plainly from a later hand. With the exception of this introduction, they may be compared with two verses from the story of the interrupted sacrifice of Gn. 22.

Gn. 16	Gn. 22
9 שובי אל גברתך והתעני תחת ידיה	19 וישב אברהם אל נערי
10 הרבה ארבה את זרעך ולא יספר מרב	17 הרבה ארבה את זרעך ככוכבי השמים

In the comparison of these verses three observations may be made, not all of equal importance, but all bearing upon one another.

1. In 16 9 and 22 19 occurs the use of שוב with אל and the person.

2. 16 10 a and 22 17 a are identical.

3. 16 10 b and 22 17 b, while not in the same language, express exactly the same idea.

The commentators all agree in making 16 9-10 the work of some other hand,—probably of E,—but they offer no explanation of how the verses came to their present position. But it would seem that in the agreement with 22 17. 19 we have a clue, not only to the way in which they came to their present position, but also as to their author.

There are in 16 and 22 two traditions which endeavored to

³ *Genesis, in loco.*

⁴ Articles "Jehovah-Jireh" and "Isaac," in *EB.*

explain the etymology of a Premosaic divine name, for the **אל יהוה יראה** of 22 is undoubtedly the **אל ראי** of 16. The account in 16 is that of the southern school J; that in 22 is that of the northern school E. The principle underlying both traditions is that at some time the divinity, the **אל**, revealed to a worshipper the fact that he was unexpectedly watching him. That this fact was connected with Hagar in one chapter and with Abraham in the other is of no great importance. Other traditions are connected with two persons and pictured upon entirely different backgrounds, *e.g.* the naming of Beersheba.

The school by which the two accounts were edited after being welded together, JEr, recognized the kinship between these two chapters, and did what had been done in numerous cases, *viz.* supplemented the one account with a verse or verses from the other. Because there was such divergence between the subject matter of the two chapters in the form in which they came to JEr, the chapters themselves could not be combined. As men from the southern kingdom, the writers of the JEr school were interested primarily in the J document, which they supplemented from E, rather than the reverse, while E was left practically intact. The transition from **אל יהוה יראה** to **אל ראי**, while possibly not apparent upon first reading, is comparatively easy.

In 16 13 the **י** of **ראי** is not the first person pronominal ending. A great many of the **ל"ה** verbs, besides **ראה**, have a participial or abstract nominal formation ending in **י** (among them may be instanced **בכי**, **בלי**, **רמי**, **כלי**, **לוי**, **מרי**, **קשי**, **תלי** and **שבי**), and the simplest explanation of **ראי** is that it is a similar participial or abstract nominal formation, so that **אל ראי** would be "the God of vision" or "the God of seeing," preferably the former, making **ראי** a synonym of **ראה**, "vision," in Is. 28 7.

In accordance with the suggestion made on pages 59-62 of the current volume of this JOURNAL, I would read in 22 11 **ויקרא אליו מלאך יהוה יירא אליו האל . . . ויאמר** instead of **ויקרא אליו מלאך יהוה יירא אליו האל . . . ויאמר**, and in 22 14 I would suggest that the verse originally read **ויקרא אברהם שם המקום ההוא אל ראי**. The

writer of 22 14 was in possession of a very old tradition that the name "God of vision" was used at that mountain because it was narrated that the אל once appeared there, substantially the same tradition which underlay 16 13. The JEr writer, following the practice of his school, substituted יְהוָה for אל, making the name read יְהוָה רֵאִי. This, however, was an unusual term, calling for some explanation. This explanation was placed in the margin: אֲשֶׁר יֹאמַר הַיּוֹם: בְּהָרִי יְהוָה יִרְאֶה, and soon crept into the text, which, under its influence, was altered to יְהוָה יִרְאֶה, the alteration in no way changing the meaning of the original.

If these conclusions be correct, they would militate against the claim of Wellhausen that רֵאִי is the name of an animal, and against the suggestion of Gunkel and others that it is the name of the place. They also complete the link in the chain of evidence that in the legends of Genesis אל is never used with the name of a place, as would be the case if polydemonism or polytheism were the prevailing thought of the time, but that it is always used with an attributive noun descriptive of some activity of the El.